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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED; PROTECT ACCORDINGLY. NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

1. (SBU) Summary. Head of the Secretariat of the Commission for Africa described the Commission's recommendations as well received. Africa is making progress, which leads to opportunities to work toward the Millennium Development Goals. The international community needs to provide more resources. The Commission's goal is to build an unstoppable coalition behind the report and get maximum support at the G8 summit. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Myles Wickstead, Head of the Secretariat of the Commission for Africa, told Pretoria-based representatives of the G8 and the EU March 16 that he was pleased with the favorable responses to the Commission's Report: it was viewed as a serious report. The Commission would use the time period leading to the G8 Summit and the UK EU Presidency to gain endorsement from donors and the international community for the report's recommendations. The Commission believes the report could help change the nature of the relationship between developing and developed countries.

3. (SBU) Wickstead described the report's recommendations as a package. Africa must do its part. Africa, he said, is making progress: NEPAD and the AU are examples. There are fewer conflicts. This progress leads to opportunities to work toward the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in health, education and agriculture. African leaders see the report as an opportunity.

4. (SBU) Wickstead stated that the international community needs to provide more resources to Africa and donors need to coordinate better to use their resources more efficiently. Tied aid should go. Wickstead said the report emphasized infrastructure because it is a key constraint on development. The lack of infrastructure restricts trade among African countries that is essential for growth. The private sector had failed to provide the funds for infrastructure development; therefore, the Commission believes that donors and African governments must assume this responsibility. Debt also constrains development, and donors must move to eliminate it. Africa needs an international arms trade treaty to control conflict, and countries should also sign the UN Convention Against Corruption. Wickstead emphasized that the Commission's views and recommendations are not necessarily those of the British government. In some ways, they differ; e.g., the repatriation of assets in UK banks.

5. (SBU) The Commission's goal is to build an unstoppable coalition behind the report. It wants to get maximum support at G8 summit. He hopes the summit will deliver on all the commission's recommendations. He acknowledged that not all G8 members will agree to all recommendations, but he hoped that between them they could endorse all the recommendations. The Commission, for example, knows that the U.S. will not support the International Financing Facility but hopes that the U.S. could double its funding commitment to the Millennium Challenge Account. Wickstead said PM Blair would want maximum buy-in for the Commission's report at the G8 Summit.

6. (SBU) Wickstead observed that the Commission had received positive responses in December from G8 capitals to its draft report. He had been pleased that consultations with G8 members had focused on areas of agreement rather than differences. He said the Commission would have more discussions in capitals over the next three months.

7. (SBU) During a discussion following Wickstead's presentation, the EU representative noted that the

emphasis on infrastructure harkened back to development philosophy of 30 years ago. Wickstead agreed and observed that perhaps the development pendulum had swung too far towards social development. Asked how African governments could show results, Wickstead said they could, for example, show that corruption is not acceptable. More countries need to sign up to the APRM.

18. (SBU) On the relationship between the Commission's Report and the report of the African Personnel Representatives, Wickstead said the Africa Partnership Forum could be the mechanism to follow through on the report's recommendations. In response to the French representative's observation that development and climate should be linked, Wickstead said that while the report contained a section on climate change, there was no formal link. He said PM Blair made this decision but offered reason why.  
FRAZER